



Let's Talk

WINTER 2011



TRAVELLING IS TAXING on the mind and body. It can also expose you to more germs than your body is probably used to dealing with, which can lead to finding yourself “under the weather.”

Being aware and prepared can keep you healthier and more stress-free as you travel.

HYGIENE

Maintaining good hygiene can increase your chances of sailing through bug-free. Remember to pack travel-sized tissues, sanitizing wipes, and grab some napkins for snacks and spills.

Also, remember good hygiene etiquette when traveling: cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze or cough and wash your hands to avoid spreading germs to yourself and others.

The CDC recommends:

- Using a tissue to cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze
 - Discarding the used tissue in the nearest waste receptacle

- Cleaning your hands frequently with soap and warm water or using sanitizing gels that contain alcohol
- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose and mouth, unless you’ve just cleaned your hands
- Avoiding close contact with people you know to be sick
- If you are sick with a fever, staying home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone
- Wearing a mask over your nose and mouth if you are coughing or sneezing excessively

COLD OR FLU

If you have a serious cold or flu, and you can avoid traveling, do stay home. This can allow your body time to rest and heal, and by staying home you won’t spread your germs to

others who may be at higher risk for serious complications.

Get your flu shot at least two weeks before traveling; this is usually enough time to allow your body to gain protection from the strains in this year’s shot. Another way to avoid spreading cold and flu germs is to follow closely the CDC recommendations above.

LOW BLOOD SUGAR

When traveling it can be difficult to gauge the time you will have between meals. So always keep a healthy snack handy to maintain your blood sugar level. Consider healthy snacks like fresh or dried fruit, vegetables, nuts, trail mix, etc.

“GO WITH THE FLOW”

Stress can invite illness, so patience and a positive attitude can make all the difference in the world with travel.

IMITATING SUCCESS: Emulating the winning tactics of successful people

YOGI BERRA ONCE GAVE THESE PROFOUND WORDS OF WISDOM: “IF YOU CAN’T IMITATE HIM, DON’T COPY HIM.” We often want to find our own way in life, but one effective way to become successful at work is to model your behavior after someone whom you admire and who has already “arrived.” Even though you can learn from someone else’s example, you don’t have to lose your own unique style. Think of their example as inspiration.

BE PREPARED

Most successful people are prepared for anything that comes their way. You can follow their lead by anticipating problems or challenges so that you can plan ahead to cover any difficulties you may face.

BE COMMITTED TO THE VISION OF THE TEAM

Getting along with the team—treating each person professionally with courtesy, respect, and dignity—should be a given. Discussing and sharing the same vision can help team members work well together. This usually requires seeing the big picture—the visions of the other individuals on the team, and of your organization as a whole.

SHOW INITIATIVE

The willingness to go above and beyond what’s expected can often make a big difference. In doing so, it’s important that you share such intentions with your supervisor before “going live.” He or she may have good reason to delay or modify those plans.

BE FLEXIBLE

Being able to roll with the punches is a great life skill, as well as a good approach to your job. Keep an open mind and be willing to change course when needed—especially in a quick changing environment.

BE CREATIVE

Part of being creative involves using your imagination to see beyond the expected. Let go and look at things with a clear mind; that will give you space for more innovative thinking. Finding alternative solutions and methods can bring success to you and any projects that you’re doing.

BE A GOOD COMMUNICATOR

After you develop your ideas to share, communicate them to others in a way that they will clearly understand them. This, too, takes some creativity. How you communicate can depend on the level of receptivity of the person receiving your message. You’ll want to frame it in a way that makes sense to your audience.

FOLLOW YOUR DREAM

One of the things that many successful people have in common is that they had a personal vision or dream of how they want to impact the world. Allow yourself the

More Face Time, Less Screen Time

As certain technologies begin to feel more like a necessity and less like a luxury, some people are finding that they tend to spend less time relating to other people face-to-face.

Yet, in-person social interactions are important—for our mental health and, as some research is starting to show, for our physical health, too.

Though no conclusive cause-and-effect relationship has been established, a number of studies have shown links with social interaction and more successful health outcomes with certain diseases and conditions, like cardiovascular disease, for example. In recent research from Brigham Young University a connection was even found with greater social involvement and having a longer life.

GET PERSONAL

Relating to people through digital media, such as email, is expedient and often gratifying, but slowing down and taking time to be together face-to-face can have a deep impact on your relationships—some things just can’t be conveyed electronically.

Make time to:

- Phone a friend and have a good conversation
- Gather friends or family and make a dinner together
- Gather friends and neighbors for a party with card or board games
- Take up a hobby with a social connection, like joining a club for painting, knitting, quilting, etc.
- Get together for a spa treatment like a facial or massage

GET PHYSICAL

Too much time in front of the screen is associated with less physical activity. Consider spending less time with the

computer and television and more time being physically active. You might also want to look for physical activities that involve teams or include social interactions before or after sports events or practices.

Some ideas for combining physical activity with quality time:

- Walk together as you talk
- Make a date with a friend or loved one that includes some time at the gym and then a nice dinner and conversation
- Walk or bike to a movie or play with a friend
- Work in the garden with a friend or loved one

OFFER SOME STRUCTURE

Research by the Henry J. Kaiser Foundation (Jan/2010) has shown that children of parents who set rules about “screen” time on average spend three fewer hours with electronics compared to children with no rules. Having similar limits for your own electronic media use could also help lessen your online time.

REALLY BEING CONNECTED

Find more time to have rewarding interactions with friends and loved ones and you could enjoy all the benefits—mental, physical, and emotional—that those connections can bring. □



MORE THAN WINTER BLUES: SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER

As the temperature drops and the days get shorter, many people change their wardrobes and routines...

But for people with seasonal affective disorder, the change of season is associated with a significant change in mood. This mood change can be overwhelming—causing them to experience a deep depression and a loss of interest in everyday activities.

Seasonal affective disorder, sometimes referred to as “SAD,” is a serious condition that requires your immediate attention. “Affective” refers to your mood—happy, sad, excited, depressed, etc. “Seasonal” indicates that it is affected by the seasons. Most people with SAD experience it in the fall and winter. While it’s less common, some people experience unwelcome changes in mood in the spring and summer.

SYMPTOMS

Symptoms of SAD usually build slowly with the shortening of days that mark winter. The symptoms are alleviated by the change of conditions in spring. The common symptoms of SAD are:

- Increased appetite with weight gain
- Increased sleeping and daytime sleepiness
- Less energy and trouble concentrating in the afternoon
- Loss of interest in work or other activities
- Slow and sluggish movement
- Social withdrawal
- Unhappiness and irritability


Sometimes people with SAD experience thoughts of suicide. This is a symptom that should not be ignored. If you experience such feelings and feel that you need help, call 911 or the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), which is available 24 hours every day of the year: 1-800-222-0364.

If you think you may be experiencing SAD or depression—even if you only detect one or two of the symptoms above, consult with a physician at your earliest opportunity. Together, you can develop a treatment plan that fits your needs.

TREATMENT

Common treatment options:

- Light therapy
 - People who take drugs that make them more sensitive to light, such as certain psoriasis drugs, antibiotics, or antipsychotics, should avoid light therapy.
 - A check-up with your eye doctor is recommended before starting light therapy treatment.
- Antidepressant medications
- Counseling or talk therapy

Don’t be fooled; SAD is a serious disorder. Seek treatment if you’re experiencing symptoms. There are effective therapies that may be able to ease your symptoms and make this winter (and the winters to come) less blue. Remember, your EAP is available to help. 



This newsletter is brought to you by the Federal Occupational Health (FOH) Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

The EAP provides assessment, counseling, referral, management consultation, and coaching services to Federal employees and agencies throughout the United States.

For administrative details about the program, contact Chiquita Cooper at 404.562.7950, ext. 125, or e-mail at Chiquita.Cooper@foh.hhs.gov.

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